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THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

IS NATURALISM ENOUGH?

I TAKE it that general usage favors the proposition that all materialists are naturalists but that not all naturalists are materialists. If such is the case it is important to determine the precise points of difference between naturalism and materialism. In what ways does materialism go beyond naturalism in its assertions?

In an article of an expository sort Professor Hook has undertaken to show that much of the controversy between materialism and idealism was motivated by the recognized conflict between naturalism and supernaturalism.[1] And here, he argues, the key concepts are teleology and probability. Now I would agree, in the main, with his excellent analysis of backgrounds and motivations. Where I differ from him is in what seems to me his rather cavalier treatment of materialism as distinguished from a rather generic sort of naturalism applicable to pragmatism, positivism, panpsychism, and other varieties of a naturalistic outlook. It is as though materialism was to be robbed of its name, pushed to one side with scarcely concealed scorn, and witness that name appropriated by naturalism. In short, the thesis seems to be that the only defensible meaning assignable to materialism is that of naturalism.

I am the more confirmed in this impression because of his attack upon materialism in his book, *From Hegel to Marx,* where he overtly rejects materialism in its traditional ontological associations on the ground that it involves an impossible correspondence theory of truth and the assumption that effects are like their causes.[2]

Now I am not surprised at this position. It is precisely what I should expect from a thinker with Professor Hook's perspective and philosophical affiliations. Yet because I differ from him on important technical points and am more ready than he to believe that materialism is reclaimable and that naturalism is not enough, I take this occasion to invite him to an exploration of the issues

[1] This JOURNAL, Vol. XXXI (1934), pp. 235 ff.

[2] Pp. 283 f. Is this not too general? Does not the organism have specialized methods of reproducing patterns and relations?

involved. Since we have a naturalistic outlook in common and since both of us admire science and its methods, there should be little, if any, emotional tension. I am even ready to grant that Dewey's position *almost* clicks. But, in drawing the philosophical threads of my thought together, I find that pragmatic naturalism has apparently waved aside many issues, largely from an almost morbid fear of the "subjective." If I am mistaken, I hope that Professor Hook can set me right. In these days it would be a pity to have empirically-minded naturalists work at cross-purposes. In what follows, then, let me say in advance that I am not expounding a simple-minded and clearly outmoded form of materialism involving reductionism, denial of connections and organization, and the treatment of consciousness as an epiphenomenon. It is a critical and philosophical form of materialism with, I believe, maturity in its theses.

Since the primary purpose is that of exploration and the determination of differences—if there are such—the best method would seem to be the presentation of a number of theses which seem to me essential to materialism and also defensible. Having stated these, I shall indicate how they seem to me to differ from those characteristic of pragmatic naturalism and then invite comment. An oldish thinker may be excused if he has systematized his principles and interrelated them. And may I say that I believe in systematic exploration as against merely piecemeal analysis? In the long run it gets one further. At any rate, the theses which I regard as alone sufficient to characterize a philosophical form of materialism fall under four headings: (*a*) epistemological, (*b*) psychophysical, (*c*) ontological, and (*d*) axiological. There you have it. I have never been able to act the little Jack Horner and pull out some plumlike dictum and make it the center and substance of my universe of discourse.

But to the theses. Needless to say, I shall make cross-references between them and seek to bring out interrelations. And I shall present them in the above order.

I

1. Perception is the basic act of cognition and, upon analysis, is discerned to involve a denotative reference to an *objective* and a sensory symbolization of that objective, plus additional conceptual meanings characterizing it and its relations.[3]

[3] Besides perception we can have the more delicate knowledge-by-acquaintance of psychical factors. I am inclined to think that all cognition involves symbolization and concepts. But here what is known is also given, while in perception it is not.

2. Perception is an elementary level of knowing and too much should not be expected of it. Even the concepts used are largely practical in import.

3. Sensations are neither acts of cognition nor, outside of introspective and inspective attention, objectives of cognition. They are taken up into the perceptual response and used therein as symbols, guides, and points of departure for conceptual characterization of external objectives.

4. Since perception expresses a response of the organic self to stimuli, it is not surprising that it is felt to be an act of the percipient. The awareness of the percipient in perception has been too much neglected in studies of perception. The objective of the directed response, the referent, is correlative to the percipient and is assumed to have a similar existential status. *This is the basis of realism.*

5. The Lockian theory of perception should be rechristened the causal theory of the generation of sensations. It is not a theory of perception at all, since it disregards the directed response of the organic self, reference, and symbolic characterization. This mistake, combined with Cartesian dualism and a false formulation of the correspondence theory of truth, led to all the difficulties which have puzzled epistemologists and to Berkeleian idealism and Humian phenomenalism.

6. We do not first know subjective states of mind and then infer external things but, from the first, in perception are concerned with objectives of organic response. Coghill has shown that motor responses even precede the development of sensory factors.[4]

7. There is no "cognitive relation" between the cognitive act of the percipient and its referent but only a guided pointing. Demonstratives like "this" and "that" are correlated with such pointing.[5]

8. Cognition never involves a literal apprehension of its objective—as naïve realism suggests. It is *as though* this were the case in perception because sensations are caught up in the directed symbolization and *function* as surfaces, appearances, and manifestations.[6]

[4] I have talked over this point with Professor C. Judson Herrick who is editing Coghill's papers.

[5] I notice that Professor Gentry has recently come to the conclusion that symbolic reference involves no literal relation to the referent. He will find this thesis in my *Principles and Problems* (1926).

[6] It is no wonder that Professor Moore is puzzled. Here, again, a more inclusive approach would aid limited analysis.

9. Physical things—including the organic self—are objectives of scientific knowledge, just as they are of perception. There are not two tables *à la* Eddington. We simply know more about the table in science.

10. With this approach it is meaningless to talk about things-in-themselves or about mental space versus physical space.

11. While sustained by a complex mechanism, cognition is simply a directed disclosure of denotables through symbols, an *achievement* which is *sui generis*. It is mythical to talk about spectator theories of cognition.

12. True, as an adjective attached to propositions, means "gives knowledge of the referent," "expresses a fact," which are equivalent. The criteria of trueness are empirical and logical of the sort usually discussed. The correspondence theory of truth should be completely reformulated as the correspondence theory of the *conditions* of knowledge. Such correspondence is a justified inference from the fact of knowledge and a study of its underlying mechanisms.

13. The pragmatic test of *praxis* is like a final examination justifying the human claim to achieve knowledge of the environment. If our validated knowledge-claims left us helpless, we might well be skeptics—if we survived.

I wish now to make a few comments upon the implications of these epistemological theses as related to pragmatism. And here is where the remarks of Professor Hook will be particularly interesting.

With the set-up indicated, it is obvious that I am not defending a merely *passive mirror-theory* of knowledge with an otiose spectator; and yet knowledge is not for me the sort of merely predictive, forward-looking affair within "experience" that it seems to be for the pragmatist. Of course, I recognize empirical predictions, just as I recognize memories and judgments about the past. But it seems to me an undeniable fact that we claim to know things coexistent with ourselves, the "antecedent" reality of Dewey's critics. Now having, from the beginning, studied James's transitive theory of knowing and Dewey's assumption that a representative realism of any sort was embogged in Cartesian dualism and the above-mentioned epistemological difficulties, I can sympathize with the path taken; and yet I hold that the above analysis escapes all these traditional difficulties and enables us to construct a physical realism. *And a physical realism is essential to materialism. So long as Hook adheres to his pragmatic theory of knowledge he can not be a materialist.* Here is a watershed. And I

find that pragmatists are seldom willing to go over the ground and ask themselves why realists think that the pragmatists have much in common with idealists. I admit that the new realists tried to get back to realism too simply and that the "essence-doctrine" was far from plausible. But those were not the only alternatives. To set Professor Hook's mind at rest I may say that I do not believe in *a priori synthetic* propositions about the world nor in *a priori* concepts. I am simply not a phenomenalist nor an "experientialist" but a realistic empiricist.

I have given all that my space allows to epistemology. I turn next to psychophysics.

II

Here, again, I can only be summary and state theses with little enlargement upon them.

1. I take it that the percipient is at least dimly aware of himself as an embodied self over against the things perceived. This awareness is deepened by action, such as walking toward the object, handling it, etc.

2. Again, it is my opinion that self-awareness is quite analogous to external perception and involves reference, symbolization, and characterization. Such self-awareness has a *spread* from awareness of bodily attitudes through kinesthetic sensations, awareness of organic tone through organic sensations, awareness of how the organic self feels through feeling, awareness of desires and purposes through desiderative and purposive experiences. This spread does not conflict with a functional unity, a sense of a reacting embodied self.[7]

3. There is no pure ego nor a disembodied consciousness. These are cultural myths.

4. The chief difference between external perception and self-awareness is that reflection forces us to regard the experiences symbolic of the self as more concerned with intra-bodily activities and adjustments. The sensory data used in external perception are more specialized and peripheral in import. It would seem that they were developed to guide external response. We do, of course, perceive our organic selves in this external fashion also.

5. In self-awareness the experiences we use symbolically are events inseparable from the activities of the organic self. But we regard the organic self as a continuant having capacities which

[7] A large ingredient in our reflective knowledge of the self is knowledge about capacities and tendencies. This knowledge is based on both external observation and self-awareness.

find expression in such activities. This categorial meaning of "being a continuant" develops conjointly in external perception and in self-awareness.

6. The organic self is as complex and differentiated as the organism for it is the organism. The brain seems to be the organ of cognition in that sensory data arise there and are interpreted in the light of organic responses and operations. But it must not be forgotten that the brain is a specialized organ reflecting and developing the sensorimotor arc. It is the whole organism that knows through the brain.

7. Introspection and retrospection are specialized forms of knowing in which attention is directed to the "total experiencing" of the individual involved in both external perception and self-awareness. It is a mistake to regard introspection as self-awareness. That is the error to which idealists, such as Parker and Brightman, are prone.[8]

8. What from the first tends, as Stout pointed out, to be considered an embodied self, can now be identified with the functioning organism. This organic self is thus known by each of us in two supplementary ways, from the outside and from the inside. These are integrated in self-knowledge.

9. But it must be fully realized that the kind of knowledge developed around external perception can never attain "consciousness" and make it an object of acquaintance. But this fact does not make consciousness inaccessible or "subjective" in a mysterious way. A good epistemology enables us to understand the situation.

10. When properly categorized, there is no conflict between external perception, self-awareness, and knowledge-by-acquaintance of consciousness. Consciousness is accessible and can be talked about.

11. Consciousness is as spatial as brain events are for it is intrinsic to them. Cartesianism was a clumsy, dualistic, rationalistic set-up. It was unevolutionary, had a stereotyped conception of matter, and a substantialistic conception of mind. Hobbes had a better approach.

12. Hence, though consciousness, or experiencing, is always personal and organism-centered, it is accessible to knowledge-by-acquaintance and public through reports. It is not "subjective" in some hidden and dualistic way. Nevertheless, it is a fact that, in his consciousness, each one is participating in the functioning

[8] I would ask both of them this question, Do we have knowledge-by-acquaintance of the self?

of his own organism in a way that he can not participate in the functioning of another's.[9]

13. By means of these theses in psychophysics we can clarify further the points in epistemology. For instance, "transcendence"—a terribly equivocal and mystifying term—can now be seen to signify only the fact that cognitions are guided denotative references. Even at the highest level of knowledge-about, a frame of reference is involved. The objective of such cognition is, intentionally, *a thing made a referent.* Such a reference involves no mysterious, literal cognitive relation; and the referent is considered coexistent with the percipient organism or concrete knower. It is a case of the organic self pointing to, and characterizing, denotables in the same world with itself. It equally points to itself, for all denotables are public in both a behavioral and a linguistic sense. *But this fact signifies that observation is a cognitive term which must be epistemologically analyzed. It is so easy to speak about "observables" without saying what we observe or how we observe.* I claim to be a realistic empiricist and hold that the organic self observes both itself and the things around it. Here is where I break with phenomenalistic empiricism. I reject completely the notion, bound up with dualism, that the "mind" in some transcendental fashion gets literally and existentially over to things and to the past and to the future. I don't believe in such a mind—and I suppose the pragmatist does not either. Knowledge is a tested referential disclosure.

14. Materialism depends upon this identification of the self with the organism.

Again I comment upon these theses with respect to the difference between materialism and pragmatic naturalism.

As I see it, pragmatism has tended to reject a consciousness embodied in the organism. While Dewey admits organism-centered enjoyings in his theory of valuation, he is not clear as to their existential status. And, as I understand it, he never developed an epistemology and a psychophysics along the above lines for fear of Cartesian dualism and epistemological quagmires. By a *volte face* which was encouraged by the traditions of objective idealism, which had the same fears, and by the suggestions contained in James's transitive, or forward-pointing, theory of knowledge, put in the context of a biological radical empiricism, he developed a peculiar kind of *experientialism,* supposedly more naïve than the naïve realism of the new realism, with knowing transformed

[9] Of course, as Dewey points out, we might produce neural Siamese twins by surgery.

into a validation of ideas. Am I right in this analysis? I remember when Dewey acknowledged that the growth of the new realism made him realize how much of a realist he really was. I think he did become a realist *in intention* and *almost* in accomplishment. But I do not think that he ever really cleared up his epistemology and his psychophysics. I should like Professor Hook to comment on these points. They are essential for this exploration of the difference between materialism and other forms of naturalism.

Now it is my ineluctable belief that a pragmatic naturalism which does not have an explicit realistic epistemology and a clear-cut psychophysics is doomed to all sorts of sophistications in the interpretation of scientific results. What are electrons and molecules? How seriously shall we take the patterns worked out by chemists and the molecular-thick coatings verified by Langmuir? Shall we take uncertainty-principles and relativity measurements to be ontological or epistemic? In other words, what kind of an ontology—which is not meta-physics—can one work out?

Thus I have endeavored to make intelligible as two preliminaries to materialism: (*a*) physical realism, and (*b*) an analytic way of thinking the insertion of consciousness in the organic self. Somehow pragmatic naturalism does not seem to me to have the sharp contours and reach that a mature materialism can have.

Let me glance for a moment at Professor Hook's comments on materialism in terms of the proposition, "Only matter exists." To him it seems impossible to believe that any philosopher could hold such a position. Now I myself hold that only material things exist—of course, as organized and in dynamic relations. Let me consider his objections.

The first is that descriptions involve generic qualities and structural relations which can not be reduced to matter in motion though they may be predicated of it. This is a little unclear. Can they be truly predicated of material systems? I would hold so since matter is for me always formed matter. Our knowledge may be generic although we believe that existence is always determinate.

The next objection concerns the status of consciousness. I have already given the outlines of my answer in the section on psychophysics and have written abundantly on the point.

The third objection raises the status of propositions and implications. Now I would hold a conceptualistic view of propositions and it seems to me that implications are not entities but *facts* about propositions with respect to one another. Since they are not entities at all they are not, of course, material things.

Why condemn, by decree, materialism to the status of adoles-

cence and retardation? *That is just what the supernaturalist wants.* As I see it, philosophy has been too genteel in its attitude towards materialism and left it to the tender mercies of the philosophic fringe.

III

I turn now to some ontological theses. It is obvious that a philosopher of any competence will work concurrently downward from the human and upward from the inorganic. There is a floor but no ceiling and only emergent integrations.

1. A positive concept of matter can be constituted in terms of empirically founded categories, such as continuance, existence, causal activity, combined with detailed facts about spatial structure, behavior, and capacities. Such categories are apprehended by intellection working on perception and self-awareness. He who, like the positivists and Hume, reduces perceiving to sensing can have neither things nor selves.

2. A mature materialism is neither reductive nor atomistically mechanical.

3. The universe is eternal and has no linear direction as a whole.[10]

4. Mind is as much a physical category as a psychical one and concerns the operations and capacities of the organic self at the cerebral level.

5. Material substances or continuants are generated and corrupted within the intrinsic endurance of material being.

6. Consciousness is a *qualitative isolate* in which we participate in our functioning. Here alone are we on the inside of nature.

7. As I see it, those who say we have no positive conception of matter are either Berkeleians or else desiderate knowledge-by-acquaintance directly or by analogy. Much turns upon the conception of the self. Is it identifiable with what is *given* in consciousness? Or do we have here merely a base for cognitive insight into the conscious activities of the organic self?

I have offered these ontological principles of a philosophical materialism in order to present to Professor Hook samples of what it means. And so I may put my query at this stage in the hypothetical form: If the epistemological and psychophysical hurdles are surmounted, do the above samples seem plausible? And, if so, in what respects does materialism exceed the limits of

[10] In the July, 1944, number of the *Philosophical Review* (Vol. LIII, pp. 359–382), I have an article entitled "Reformed Materialism and Intrinsic Endurance" which illustrates in detail what I mean by this thesis.

pragmatic naturalism? It seems to me to be going further in the same general direction and to suggest improvements upon pragmatic experientialism. It removes a certain cloudiness in technical matters. But it is a reformed, or philosophical, materialism. To me, one amusing thing is the fact that the developments in physics seem to me to have largely helped to make a philosophical materialism possible, while physicists are assuring the public that it liquidates materialism. I suppose it is partly a semantic question. What they should mean is the tautological statement that the new physics liquidates the old physics.

IV

For the present purpose the discussion of axiology can be very brief. I believe that the materialist need differ very little from the pragmatic naturalist in these matters. Personal values and valuation express the developed attitudes and sentiments of the individual in his social setting. These can be repeatedly tested and revalued in the light of experience. Presumably the process is not arbitrary but reflects satisfactions and frustrations of the self in its relations. There is no difference, in principle, when it comes to institutional values and norms. There are, of course, no Platonic, transcendental values, no non-natural values.

As against the positivist, the materialist holds that value-meanings can be developed by the organic self and used in the appraisal of things, events, and possibilities. Such appraisals always have a frame of reference and are not to be regarded as cases of cognition. Valuations and cognitions are not reducible to one another, though knowledge guides valuation. If I am not mistaken, the pragmatic naturalist would also reject the positivist's too simple reductionism of values to emotions and their verbal expression. I wonder, however, whether he has himself done justice to the self as a pretty determinate sort of continuant *and has not been too forward-looking after the pattern set in his transitive theory of knowing.* In other words, has he not overused the application of scientific method in a field where the broad outlines of human insight and integrity express the *quality* of human beings? Such quality is, of course, not static or socially unconditioned. I repeat that there need be no basic conflict between the philosophical materialist and the pragmatic naturalist in the field of values and that all of us owe a great debt to John Dewey. I myself prefer his correlation of values with judgments of valuation as against enjoyings and desirings, as personal experiences. And these judgments can be constantly tested in the light of such enjoyings. But here, again, as shown in his dis-

cussion with Professor Rice, it seems to me that Dewey is too afraid of the "subjective." So far as I can see, there is no inaccessible subjective; but personal consciousness is a basic fact upon which he who has it can make public reports.[11] And he is bound to use his own data in both observational and valuational judgments. It is the reference and the judgment that is communicable. I can not literally transfer my experiencings to another. I can only report upon them verbally and through action.

V

And so I bring my exploration of the differentiae of naturalism and materialism to a conclusion. I have made my theses as explicit and as cumulative as possible. The epistemological and psychophysical theses constitute the framework for the ontology. I suppose these amount to realistic principles which claim to accomplish more exactly what pragmatic naturalism has achieved by biologism, the rejection of Cartesian dualism, and a kind of objective experientialism. I, likewise, arrive at biologism and deny Cartesian dualism. But, by a very careful analysis of perception, I seek to justify personal knowledge-claims, which can be linguistically communicated, about things coexistent with the organic self. "Transcendence" is robbed of its mystery by being reduced to *pointing* to objectives spatially and biologically external to the embodied self and the claim that sensory symbols and concepts disclose such objectives. Such claims are empirically tested and also guaranteed by *praxis*, personal and cultural. Psychophysics is so conceived that a private consciousness does not involve the traditional Lockian paradoxes. And the result is that the embodied self becomes an organic self.

This approach makes possible an ontological horizon which seems less natural to pragmatism and more congenial to materialism.

Now I have been, rightly or wrongly, persuaded that pragmatism has defended itself in part on errors in the new realism and in the essence-type of critical realism. I should very much like Professor Hook to indicate his objections to my theses which, I hope, deserve careful examination. Let me assure him that in the contrast with obscurantism and sterile formalism I am wholeheartedly on the side of progressive and liberal thought. But I am convinced that clarification on fundamentals would strengthen the hand of philosophy. The *Blitzkrieg* of the Vienna Kreis

[11] A really splendid discussion between Dewey and Rice, far above the level of positivistic reductionism of values to commands and interjections, this JOURNAL, Vol. XL (1943), pp. 5–14; 309–317; 533–543; 543–552; 552–557.

seems to have failed. Neo-positivism has been too negative and conventionalistic. Pragmatic naturalism appears to me far more comprehensive and plastic. Perhaps Professor Hook and I can locate our primary differences and establish preliminary protocols.

ROY WOOD SELLARS

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IS PHYSICAL REALISM SUFFICIENT?

PROFESSOR SELLARS' paper [1] contains three things: (1) an exposition of his own philosophy which until now he has called "naturalism"; (2) a repetition of some familiar objections to Dewey; and (3) a criticism of my essay, "What is Materialism?", specifically of my interpretation of what the central issue was, and is, between all historic forms of materialism and idealism.

In this reply, I shall comment mainly on the last point and, for reasons that will appear later, make only brief observations on the first two.

(1) My essay on materialism was not devoted, as Professor Sellars maintains, to "an analysis of backgrounds and motivations." It attempted to locate the basic issue between materialism and idealism as continuous philosophical traditions in European philosophy. The argument sought to prove that this issue was not a realistic theory of knowledge—for objective idealism repudiated subjectivism,—nor nominalism—both Hobbes and Berkeley were nominalists,—nor determinism, but rather the question of naturalism or supernaturalism, where the latter term was interpreted to include both theistic philosophies and non-theistic philosophies which subscribed to a belief in a Cosmic Purpose or a meaningful totality or any variation on the Platonic Form of the Good.

In discussing materialism, I argued that the assertion "only matter is real," which defenders and opponents of materialism have most frequently accepted as its key principle, contained two ambiguous terms. "Matter," so to speak, was an historical variable whose specific values were supplied by the physical theories of the day. There is obviously a vast difference between the Democritean "atoms in the void," the Daltonian atom, and an electron whose mass is defined as electro-magnetic inertia. A materialist considers a new theory of the constitution of matter for which valid evidence can be provided as a refinement of his position, not as a refutation. "Real" meant either (*a*) existence, (*b*) importance, or (*c*) necessary condition. Where "real" meant importance, then whoever

[1] Vol. XLI (1944).

said "Only matter is real" therewith admitted the existence of something other than matter, in fact everything that was unimportant. Where "real" meant necessary condition, the statement was elliptical and became complete only when an answer was given to the question: a necessary condition in respect to what state of affairs or expected consequence? In so far as anyone could discover that changes in material systems, irrespective of how matter was described, were a necessary condition of some determinate outcome, such discovery constituted a piece of knowledge that in time was accepted independently of philosophical allegiance. The overwhelming evidence of scientific discoveries justified the conclusion that events usually called "mental," "moral," or "spiritual" do not occur save in the presence of conditions of the kind with which the physical sciences deal. (It is much safer to refer to these compulsive conditions by the phrase "subject-matter of the physical sciences" than by the word "matter," since the concrete meaning of the latter is always explicated in terms of the findings of the sciences.) Where "real" meant "exist," then I held that the statement "only matter exists" is absurd. It may have been asserted but could not have been believed. For that from which matter was distinguished and without which it could have no meaning, would in all consistency, have to be declared non-existent. The qualities of human experience in all its vast reaches would be dismissed as unreal. The existence of the situations which provoked the discovery of matter would be called into question, differences in the qualities of gross objects denied or explained away, and the very attributes and relations predicated of matter would have to be denominated unreal.

Such a position, as everyone knows, is tantamount to reductionism or illusionism. It generates insoluble problems about the relation of reality to appearances which must themselves have some kind of reality or existence in order to differentiate them from the really real.

My contention was that taken literally the key principle of traditional materialism (as well as that of idealism, "Only Mind is real") represented a violent abuse of language. But I argued that it was not intended to be taken literally. Some of the evidence that it was not literally intended, or actually believed, is to be found in the writings of the materialists (and idealists) themselves in which the distinctions recognized by science and common-sense experience are taken over and rebaptized as adjectival differentiations in the Matter (or Mind) presumed to be exclusively existent.

Far from "pushing [materialism] to one side with scarcely concealed scorn," as Professor Sellars taxes me, I was vindicating

its claims to be taken seriously by showing that its differences with idealism were not over logically meaningless expressions—as so many battle-cries and slogans are—but over the massive issue, which can be stated in an intelligible way, of naturalism and supernaturalism. I may be mistaken in my conclusion that this is the main issue. But Professor Sellars has not indicated wherein.

In the only place he touches on my argument, he bravely professes acceptance of the statement: "only matter exists." He adds, "of course, as organized and in dynamic relations." Despite Professor Sellars' qualification, I can not believe that he really intends to say this because, with all due respect, it is obvious nonsense. How obvious is apparent when we observe that the term "existence" is used interchangeably by Professor Sellars not only with the terms "reality" and "entity" but also with the terms "being" and "physical." Thus, in consulting his *Philosophy of Physical Realism* in order to get some light on what possible meaning the statement, "Only matter exists," has for him, I find the following: "Back of pomp and circumstance, back of love and beauty, and tragedy and happiness, lies—matter. In short, the physical is but another name for *being,* for existence" (p. 6, italics in original). From which it follows that we can not intelligibly speak of anything which is not physical or material since we can attribute no being to it. Yet surely Professor Sellars does not mean to deny that pomp and love and beauty have a genuine status in experience. What he means undoubtedly is that their nature and history are in part at least effects of changes in material things and inseparable from them. It is understandable that he wishes to exalt matter as a cause in order to better control its effects. But it is not necessary to degrade the effects as if they were impostors in experience that vanish in the presence of matter. The existence and being of effects can not be called into question without calling into question the existence and being of causes.

Professor Sellars counters my remark that qualities and relations can be predicated of matter but can not be reduced to it, with the retort that for him "matter is always formed matter." So it is—for us all. This is an analytical consequence of the fact that we can speak of it at all. But again, the form or shape of matter is not material, the organization of material particles is not another particle, a relation between events is not an event. Behind Professor Sellars' abuse of language lurks the error of assuming that what is inseparable is also indistinguishable. The fact that Professor Sellars insists that he is not a reductionist indicates that he shrinks from the logical consequences of this assumption. But he has not brought his statements in line with his beliefs. A true

corollary of my general thesis is that, although some philosophers have talked reductionism, no one has seriously believed it.

The same analysis applies to the status of consciousness and propositions. From the fact that there is no disembodied consciousness, it does not follow that consciousness is *identical* with the body, for all of us, including Professor Sellars, legitimately speak of some bodies as not conscious. Consciousness may be considered as a determinate organization or form or act or function or behavior of the body, and an analysis of its operation may reveal that it involves the presence of a physical environment and social world as well as an organism, but it must none the less have distinguishable qualities that can not be *identified* with the defining characteristics of the physical, organic, and social. Belief in the immortality of personality or self (as in the existence of God) is false, not meaningless or self-contradictory as Professor Sellars would have to believe if he meant what he said. And, finally, whether he takes a conceptualistic or nominalistic or behavioral approach to propositions, so long as he holds that they are expressions of facts in symbols of *discourse,* therewith recognizing a distinction between things and discourse about them, he must abandon the view that only matter exists.

(2) I come now to Professor Sellars' theses. I forego discussing them in detail for two reasons. First, I regard them as in the main irrelevant to the issue between materialism and idealism. Many of them obviously can be affirmed by followers of Leibniz or Hegel. A philosopher may be a materialist, to take the first of Professor Sellars' theses, independently of whether or not he regards perception as the basic act of cognition. Nor do I understand why a neo-realist can not be a materialist even if he does oversimplify the act of perception. It strikes me as rather humorless for Professor Sellars to assert that his theses are "alone sufficient" to characterize materialism. For to my knowledge this would make him the only materialist in the history of philosophy. An enviable but rather lonely distinction!

Second, I can not discuss these views in detail because, although suggestive, they are at the same time very obscure to me. My impression is that he does not escape the epistemological trap set by Locke. He tries to break out of it by fiat and a new set of terms. I do not understand what his "objectives" or "denotables" are, why he is entitled to them if perception is the basic act of knowledge rather than a guided phase in the activity of judgment, and by what right he assumes that their nature is "disclosed" (another ambiguous term) by "sensory symbols" in cognition. He says it is meaningless to talk about things-in-themselves, but it seems to

me that on his view they would have to exist anyhow since the sensory elements which in some way "disclose" objectives are not regarded as part of their nature. He claims to have no commerce with the spectator theory of knowledge, but all that perception and cognition do on his theory is to point. There is no serious allowance given to perception as an attitude of "predictive expectancy," nor of the rôle of ideas in modifying the problematic situation that provokes thinking. Where the activity of the "percipient" in knowing is taken seriously some type of the predictive theory of truth is inescapable.

I may be mistaken in my impressions of Professor Sellars' epistemology,—statements of theses are better understood after discussion than before it,—but until the indispensability of any particular theory of knowledge to a naturalistic world view is established, I can not see that the subject has much moment for what I regard as the issue between materialism and idealism.

(3) Professor Sellars' critical observations on Dewey have been made so often before and so often answered at length by Dewey himself that there is little I can add. Despite the appearance of similarity between some of Sellars' theses and Dewey's ideas, e.g., in the denial that sensation is a form of cognition, I believe that Sellars' understanding of Dewey is peripheral because he fails to note the importance of the empirical starting-point of Dewey's analysis of knowledge, viz., the existence of a *problem* to whose resolution knowing behavior is directed. It is their function in the process of finding out which, according to Dewey, serves as the only verifiable guide to the nature of perceptions and ideas and not a transcendent something at which they only point. Criticism of Dewey is most likely to prove fruitful when it concerns itself with the actual accuracy of his report of the rôle of perception and ideas in inquiry instead of proceeding, as in Sellars' case, from an alleged solution to the problem of the existence of the external world. For Dewey this problem is artificial because it can not be so much as stated without assuming that we possess genuine knowledge of the world we live in, particularly of the mechanisms of knowing. It is rather late in the day to challenge Dewey's realism (save in some special epistemological sense) in view of his insistence that knowing is one mode of interaction between environment and organism and no more creates the world than eating creates the things eaten, although both leave the world different in virtue of their activities. An analogous misunderstanding is revealed in Sellars' attempt to make Dewey out a kind of phenomenalist whereas, in fact, Dewey accounts for the generation of sense-

phenomena in terms of interactive processes into which physical things, organisms, histories, and perspectives enter. These are *not* constructs of sense-data as a consistent phenomenalism must maintain. And it remains a mystery to me how Dewey can appear to someone who professes to believe, "Only matter exists," as both too subjective and not subjective enough.

A few concluding words on materialism and naturalism. The terms we use to designate philosophical positions have very important social effects. Names sometimes hurt more than sticks and stones. But for purposes of theoretical analysis any term will do provided it has an intelligible opposite. There have been many varieties of thought that have gone by the name of materialism and naturalism in the history of philosophy. (The same is true of idealism.) What is common to them is not a theory of stuff or the constitution of matter or a theory of knowledge or a system of ontology, but the belief that valid knowledge is knowledge warranted by scientific method and the confidence that the application of scientific method (not necessarily the methods and techniques of physics as a special discipline) to all fields of human experience, will enlarge our understanding or increase our control. As a consequence of this commitment, naturalists and materialists, whenever they have the courage of their method, always find themselves in doctrinal opposition to idealists of all varieties on the question of the existence of God or the presence of Cosmic Purpose. This, so far as I can discover, is the doctrinal dividing line between them.

Naturalists divide among themselves on many other issues. There are different naturalistic theories of sense-perception, of knowledge, of ethical evaluation, of political obligation. They can not, of course, all be true but as distinct from Professor Sellars I can not see that belief in, say, one particular theory of sense-perception is a *sine qua non* of the naturalistic approach any more than belief in one of several conflicting theories of light. The reason Sellars overloads naturalism with all sorts of doctrinal impedimenta flows in part from a mistaken conception of the relation between philosophy and science. Unless I am grossly misreading him, he holds that philosophy can not accept the facts of scientific knowledge as valid until it can answer the prior question of how knowledge is possible. Discussing the relation between philosophy and science, he writes: "This prominence of theory of knowledge is due to its being a necessary condition of advance. . . . Philosophy could not allow itself the carefree assumptions that

science permitted itself. It could not accept the fact of knowledge without some idea of what knowing is. . . . And, fortunately, there is good reason to believe that, at last, philosophy [through physical materialism] has mastered its epistemological problem and is ready to give science a few pointers. If science will listen, a new era of co-operation may begin" (*The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, pp. 44–45).

All such notions seem to me to be vain conceits. As well say that we can not use our eyes to good purpose unless we understand how vision is possible. At least a theory of vision may sometimes be useful in helping us to see better, but a theory of knowledge such as Professor Sellars holds can not ever help us to know better. And if we can not accept the fact of knowledge without "some idea of what knowing is," how can we accept the facts of knowledge about *knowing*? Philosophy as such has no constructive office to perform in extending the boundaries of knowledge of the world, either in rivalry or self-constituted partnership with science. Its task in relation to science is one of analysis, interpretation, and criticism, i.e., the clarification of its methods and techniques and language, and the patient exhibition of the ways in which the abstractions of science are related to the objects, qualities, and processes of ordinary experience from which it starts and to which it returns.

If a theory of knowledge in general is not necessary in order to accept the findings of science as genuine knowledge, neither is a system of ontology necessary to guarantee that knowledge. The great danger of a materialistic ontology is that it may be seduced into opposing scientific advances when they seem incompatible with its ontological axioms. Thus, if I understand him aright, Professor Sellars believes that Einstein's theory is epistemologically true but "ontologically false," that "the true nature" of time can not be grasped by science, and that modern physics is on the wrong track because it has abandoned the category of substance. The same attitude is expressed in Professor Sellars' fear that the pragmatic naturalist has "overworked the application of scientific method" to the study of the self, which certainly sounds strange in the mouth of a naturalist. All such conclusions seem to me to arise from failing to study the language of everyday affairs and of scientific theory in their appropriate contexts, to interpret the concepts of science operationally, and to recognize that scientific knowledge does not invalidate the common-sense knowledge of which it is a more careful and precise development.

Naturalism may not be enough since there is so much in the world still to be explored. But for the world we already know,

Professor Sellars' materialism or physical realism is surely insufficient.

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COMMENTS AND CRITICISM

COMMENTS ON PROFESSOR MILLER'S CALENDAR THEORY OF FREEDOM

"The Calendar Theory of Freedom" by Professor David Miller in a recent issue of this JOURNAL [1] presents a very plausible "proof" that man is "free" to control his conduct in virtue of his ability to integrate his thought with his action. This plausibility, in the opinion of the present writer, is superficial and does not stand the test of critical examination. Man may be "free," but the author has not submitted conclusive arguments to substantiate that contention.

In his article, Professor Miller describes human freedom in the following manner. "By human freedom we mean not only political freedom from human dictators and tyrants, but *especially* [italics mine] freedom from the mechanical laws of nature and from efficient causes which are often erroneously said to determine completely our activities and even our ideas" (p. 321). How does this freedom from mechanical laws come about? The author answers: ". . . man controls his conduct by ideas, and since ideas are qualitatively different from the mechanical world or are mental, man's intelligent conduct is determined (or controlled) by something he creates, or there is self-determination" (p. 325).

This is briefly the thesis that Professor Miller presents. Let us see what Professor Miller believes justifies his view that ideas are not caused by the past, what he takes to be implied by this fact, and what it actually implies. Professor Miller is not unaware of the importance of his contention that ideas are not caused by the past, for he writes: "The question will arise immediately: Are not these ideas a mere result of past experience or are they not caused by the past? No. We must explain why not" (p. 325).

Professor Miller's explanation must be given fully for the essential contention of his article is important. He writes: "Reflective thinking is the very opposite of acting by habit which is a result of past experience. In reflective thinking one is attempting to break a habit or at least one is trying to set up a new habit

[1] Volume XLI (1944), pp. 320–328.

(act) which will answer to the new experience but to which experience his old past does not answer. That is, in reflective thinking one is trying to set up a *new past* which will answer to the new experience, which experience is the very basis of thinking at all. Certainly this new past which one sets up is not determined by the old past, for the two are in conflict and both can not answer to the new experience. The new past, or the ideational construction of it, can not, therefore, follow logically (nor, consequently, mechanically) from the old past. This new past is (for the time) simply an ideational construction designed to answer to or account for the new experience . . . which does not follow from the old past, for our old habits do not answer to the new experience. Therefore this construction or idea certainly is not a *result* of the past in a mechanical sense, in a logical sense, in a causal sense, or in any other sense" (p. 325).

Now, even assuming the truth of Professor Miller's contention that the "old past" does not account for our ideas, his denial of mechanical determinism is still untenable in terms of what he says, for he overlooks a possible causal connection between experience and ideas, and thus his denial of determinism in the production of our ideas does not have the force he takes it to have.

This is so for the reason that even though the "old past" does not determine our ideas, it may be the case that the "new experience," whether itself causally determined by the "old past" or not so determined, causally determines our ideas just as effectively as the "old past" has sometimes been thought to do. Professor Miller, as we saw, says: "Certainly this new past [ideational construction] which one sets up is not determined by the old past, for the two are in conflict and both can not answer to the new experience" (p. 325). Obviously, the "new experience" can not be rejected as an efficient cause of the new idea on such grounds, for the "new experience" and the ideational construction are not in conflict, but in harmony.

If the "new experience," which is not our creation, *is* causally determined by the past, then a clear chain of efficient causation from past experiences to the idea can be traced. If the "new experience" is causally undetermined by the past (though this is certainly not the case, and can easily be shown by illustration not to be the case), it can still serve to determine our ideas. On both hypotheses, in other words, determinism of man's conduct by something external to him is still a possibility even though the "old past" is ruled out as a direct factor, or ruled out entirely.

It is true, of course, that Professor Miller has affirmed that since ideas are qualitatively different from the mechanical world,

they can not be caused by it. This contention, however, is what he attempted to prove by the argument quoted at length earlier, and it is a contention which, as I have indicated, he has not substantiated.

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BOOK REVIEW

The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino. PAUL OSKAR KRISTELLER. Translated by Virginia Conant. New York: Columbia University Press. 1943. xiv + 441 pp. $4.50.

Reversing the chronological order the students of the history of modern philosophy arrived at its beginnings last. For a long time, preoccupation with the systems of the seventeenth century kept the interest in the earlier Italian thinkers in abeyance. Jacob Burckhardt's celebrated work on the culture of the Renaissance omitted philosophy. Only after Ernst Cassirer, with his *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance* (1927), had laid the foundation of a more systematic study of Renaissance thought did the work in the field receive a fresh impulse. Dr. Kristeller has the privilege of breaking virgin ground. His is the first monograph to deal extensively with Ficino's philosophy in its entirety. It is gratifying for the historian of philosophy to find the work done by so competent a scholar as Dr. Kristeller. His achievement will not easily be surpassed by a rival. It is, the reviewer believes, among the truly valuable things which the political gale of our time has deposited as a flotsam on these shores. Written in German, the book was translated into Italian first, then from Italian into English. As a result of this double passage from one medium to another it may have lost some of its original freshness. In fact, one might wish it somewhat less ponderous than it appears now. On the other hand, it has mellowed as the fruit of protracted, painstaking consideration.

Instead of interpreting Ficino's works separately, the writer puts before us that system of Ficinian philosophy which Ficino himself failed to develop systematically. Into this structure the interpreter fits a scattered material whose greater part, naturally, is furnished by the *Theologia Platonica,* Ficino's principal work. The source currently referred to is the *Opera Omnia* (Basel, 1561) and, less frequently, the *Supplementum Ficinianum,* edited by Dr. Kristeller in 1937 (Florence, 2 vols.). Since the Latin works are obtained only with difficulty and since, furthermore, there is no English translation, the author thought it wise to interlard his

exposition with numerous and extensive excerpts from Ficino in English. Thus he permits the student to test the interpretation in the light of the philosopher's own words, securing for his book some of the advantages of a "reader in Ficino." The formidable array of quotations is an incumbrance but, under the circumstances, a highly useful one. It may here be remarked that, thanks to Dr. Kristeller's endeavors, the plight of scholars interested in Ficino and Renaissance philosophy will soon be eased. In collaboration with Ernst Cassirer and J. H. Randall, Jr., he is preparing an English edition of Renaissance Philosophy whose first, nearly completed, volume will contain, alongside Valla, Pico, and Pomponazzi, Ficino's *Quaestiones quinque de mente,* translated by Miss Josephine Burroughs.[1]

In building up his systematic structure the author follows on the whole the ancient distinction between *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis.* After discussing methodological questions and sketching Ficino's historical position in the introductory Part One, he proceeds, in Part Two ("Being and the Universe"), to develop the *transcendentalia,* i.e., the fundamental concepts that straddle over the borderlines of classes and spheres of reality. The concept of Being and its relation to thought, the unity and perfection of the world, the hierarchical order which articulates the cosmos, and causality which links its elements together—these and related ideas are subjected to a careful analysis. In this way an ontological framework is defined and a basis secured for Part Three ("Soul and God") with its treatment of the traditional objects of "special metaphysics" minus cosmology—God, the nature and life of the soul, the problem of good and evil. Thus man and his destiny are brought into the focus of attention.

The two concluding chapters of Part Two deserve special mention, both for the intrinsic interest of the problems dealt with and for their novelty within the literature on Renaissance thought. They examine the *primum in aliquo genere* and the *appetitus naturalis* severally. These two doctrines receive "a more detailed consideration because of their peculiar character as well as because of their frequent occurrence; and inasmuch as almost all the basic motives of Ficino's thought are united and fused in them their interpretation also serves as a test for understanding his entire philosophy" (p. 146).

A *primum in aliquo genere,* being "within" a class, one among many, is a particular like the other members of its class. At the

[1] The Renaissance volumes are to form a part of a series of philosophical classics which is being prepared, under my editorship, by the University of North Carolina Press.

same time, it is more than a superlatively excellent particular. For Ficino, the *primum* "contains the essence of the universal and communicates it to the other members of the genus. The other members are therefore related to the universal only through the *primum* and since the objective quality is conceived almost in the form of a material quality, the logical relation also becomes concrete and almost material" (p. 149). So the doctrine of the *primum* appears as an attempt to "proceed from a formal logic to a concrete and objective logic" (p. 150), and the interpreter claims for it an eminent place in the history of thought. "The realist and the nominalist doctrines are here replaced by an entirely new concept, which we may describe as a speculative identity of the universal and the particular" (p. 149).

With all respect for Dr. Kristeller's superior knowledge of Ficino I feel inclined to balk at so exacting an affirmation. No doubt, the *primum* does hold an important place in Ficino's thinking, and the author deserves credit for having discovered and established this fact once and for all. But in the enthusiasm of discovery he may have overshot his mark. The idea of the *primum*, this much is clear, is eminently apt to link together two heterogeneous metaphysical conceptions: the Platonic theory of separately existing, transcendent Ideas or Forms on the one hand, and the Aristotelian concept of a "class" (*genus*), comprising substances ordered in a scale of perfection according to the relative preponderance of form over matter on the other. This was the function allotted to the term in scholastic philosophy. Since the task of reconciling the Platonic Ideas with the Aristotelian concepts of substance and analogy is infinitely more pressing for Ficino than it was for St. Thomas, we are not surprised at the new dignity conferred upon a heretofore inconspicuous term. Dr. Kristeller is well aware of the fact that the *primum* is rooted in tradition and familiar among the schoolmen (p. 152). But in calling it a "supposedly Platonic concept" (p. 152) and asserting that, as a formal concept, it is not only "entirely independent of the theory of ideas" but more original than this theory (p. 163), he seems to overlook an alternative and, it would seem to me, much simpler view of the matter. It is its very simplicity and obviousness which makes me submit the following suggestion with some diffidence.

The *primum in aliquo genere*, I suggest, is little more than a scholastic name for a Platonic concept. Evidence is supplied by one of the best-known passages in one of the best-known dialogues. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates insists on receiving not the "safe and stupid answer" which relates the particular directly to the Idea but an answer equally safe and more enlightening—the answer

that takes the détour over the *primum in genere.* "If anyone asks you 'what that is of which the inherence makes the body hot,' you will reply not heat . . . but fire, a far superior answer" (105 b-d). Further *prima* mentioned by Plato in this context are the monad (as related to the Form of oddness), fever (as related to the Form of disease), and soul (as related to the Form of life). Two of these four, fire and soul, are the stock examples with which St. Thomas and, after him, Ficino illustrate the concept of *primum in aliquo genere,* St. Thomas probably drawing on Aristotle as an intermediary (compare, e. g., *Summa Theol.* I, Q.1, art. 3 with Aristotle, *Metaphys.* 993b 25). Ficino, in the passages referred to by the writer on page 154, clearly bases himself upon the *locus classicus* in the *Phaedo.*

By treating the Idea of the beautiful as though it were an exceedingly beautiful thing, Plato himself blurs the distinction between the Idea and the *primum,* so clearly maintained in the *Phaedo.* Ficino, coerced by his Aristotelianism, went much farther, arriving at a result which, as far as I am able to understand it, seems to involve a partial fusion of the two terms. To that extent his conception of the *primum* is original. Does it actually render possible "a clearer and more concrete interpretation of reality as a whole"? (p. 170). Or is it an unsuccessful attempt to engraft upon a body of Aristotelian concepts a Platonism enthusiastically snatched from the rediscovered dialogues of the divine master?

The discussion of *Appetitus Naturalis* (pp. 171–199) offers none of the complexities of thought which make the chapter on the *primum* hard reading. The "natural appetite" covers three seemingly heterogeneous phenomena: (1) the tendency of desire towards gratification, (2) the tendency of a creative urge, both in nature and man, towards consummation, (3) movement. Assuredly, Dr. Kristeller is right in stressing the cardinal importance of this concept. It denotes the dynamic bond without which the universe as a moving whole would fall asunder. Yet again I suspect the author of a somewhat partial zeal for the glory of his hero. To a more sceptical reader the *appetitus naturalis* may seem not too common a name for a very common thing, i. e., for a persistent feature of patristic and medieval philosophy. There was no need for transferring "the Aristotelian theory of elementary movement in all its aspects to the movement of the soul" (p. 192). Aristotle's theory of movement is plainly an offshot of the same root that had flowered into the Platonic doctrine of Eros and, even while assuming the frigid manners of an exclusively physical or astronomic theory, it never disowned its extraction—not in Aristotle himself and still less in his Christian followers. The inspiration

for the "transference," Dr. Kristeller thinks, came to Ficino from a passage in St. Augustine's *Confessions* (XIII, 9), where love's striving after God is likened to the gravitation of solids and the upward tendency of fire. "What is an isolated image in St. Augustine," he writes, "is elaborated by Ficino into a complete theory which is of decisive importance for his world system" (p. 192). As far as the statement relates to St. Augustine, it is open to doubts. An examination of parallel passages (*Epist.* 55 X 18, *Epist.* 157 II 9, *De civ. Dei* XI 28) readily shows that the analogy, far from being an "isolated image," is a salient trait of St. Augustine's thought. After St. Augustine, the idea of love as a form of "natural gravitation" seems to have become a commonplace in philosophy. Glancing through the pages of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica,* I come across this: *"Sed ignis, quamdiu manet, semper ascendit. Ergo caritas, quamdiu manet, ascendere potest"* (II–II, q. 24, a. 10). The idea of a "natural appetite" is central for Ficino, but so is it for Christian metaphysics in general. The honors of a pathfinder must be withheld from him.

What is Ficino's peculiar contribution? What is his place in the history of ideas? The two questions must be answered in conjunction with each other. Yet one of the two may be emphasized in preference to the other. The present monograph centers clearly on the first question. The analyst seeks to lay bare the "basic conceptions" of the philosopher. Taking these for his point of departure, he "is in a position to repeat the author's whole process of thought" (p. 8). The result arrived at by this reconstruction must finally fit into the inventory of the philosopher's expressed opinions as the living face fits into the mask taken from life.

This ideal of a philosophical historiography stems from Hegel. It presupposes the idea of philosophy as a "deed," i. e., a temporal process which is to be re-enacted or "repeated" by the interpreter. The term "repetition" owes its currency to the renegade Hegelian, Kierkegaard, and the conception of history suggested by it has been revived in our time by Martin Heidegger. Dr. Kristeller's book belongs as a late-comer in that covey of philosophical monographs which, in the period between the two World Wars, testified to the fruitfulness of Heidegger's teaching. Walter Bröcker published his *Aristoteles,* H.-G. Gadamer his commentary to Plato's *Philebus,* Fritz Kaufmann his *York von Warthenburg,* Gerhard Krüger his works on Kant and Plato, Carl Löwith his analyses of Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche—to mention only some samples of this rich harvest. Outside Germany these works, remarkable both for scholarship and integrity of philosophical intent, received but scant attention. But it is

only fair to state that the excellence of Dr. Kristeller's book is typical of a whole group of recent "phenomenological" contributions to the history of philosophy.

The labor of the analytical destruction and critical reconstruction of philosophical systems as performed by nineteenth-century Hegelians resulted, or was designed to result, in a picture of the history of philosophy as one great constructive sweep—as a movement culminating in, and absorbed by, the climactic movement of the dialectical system of truth. In Heidegger's neo-Hegelianism, the "repetition" to be performed by the interpreter appears as an isolated "existential venture." With a mind wide open to problems but committed to no philosophical conviction, the historian is to yield to the intellectual movement embodied in a document of past thought, reliving it in the present of his own philosophical consciousness. In the pre-War era the authentically Hegelian conception of the history of philosophy had petered out into *Problemgeschichte*, best typified by Windelband. Thanks to Heidegger, its Kierkegaardian version became productive in a discontinuous series of monographic "revivals," penetrating, animated by genuine philosophical curiosity, and strangely aimless—well-hewn stones with no builder in sight.

Heidegger's ideal of historical analysis, when put into practice by himself, results in some violence done to history. This is not surprising. Once we identify ourselves with the intellectual process of someone else, we may deal with it as imperiously as we are wont to deal with our own thoughts. In his book on Kant, Heidegger, with no little audacity, accuses the great philosopher of shrinking from his real problem. But the same ideal produces very different results when applied by Heidegger's disciples. On the whole they set a model of unassuming and sensitive attention to whatever historical object they elect to investigate. Their procedure is "phenomenological" in the best sense of the word. This holds to a high degree of the book before us. One can hardly go further in subordinating oneself to the object of study than Mr. Kristeller does. However, the method employed commits him to a "heroic style" of interpretation. The philosopher must be viewed as confronted with the problem of Being which is also the problem of human existence; and he must be viewed as grasping this problem with the primeval freshness of the creative mind. Otherwise his individuality would be extinguished just where it is supposed to be manifest as a creative principle. Is Ficino enough of a philosopher to stand so searching a test? We might admire him as a great humanist and yet consider his stature too slight for the heavy panoply in which his interpreter expects him to fight. By virtue

of casting his hero for too big a rôle, he occasionally loses sight of his individuality.

Faithful to his ideal of interpretation, Dr. Kristeller searches for the "living foundation" of Ficino's thought—that creative center which is engendered by the rapport between an individual thinker and the universal problem. This germinant core must be held responsible for the purposeful modifications wrought upon a mass of traditional ideas and stamping them with the unique imprint *Ficinus concepit*.

Twice, on page 350 and on the last page of the book, Mr. Kristeller tells us what this "living foundation" is. The soul and God, i. e., the subject and object of contemplation transformed into substances, form the foci of Ficino's metaphysics, he avers. In the words of the concluding paragraph, the theory of the soul results from Ficino's "continual effort to give a conceptual interpretation of a few basic facts and so to transform those facts into objective principles. In other words, man and his attitudes constitute the point of departure of Ficino's philosophy. In this fact we must look for the secret of his historical, philosophical, and human influence and significance" (p. 401). To these sentences save the last I readily assent with the proviso that they apply equally well to Plato himself and to the majority of patristic-medieval philosophers. The question is whether there can be a philosopher to which they do not apply. The desire to exalt Ficino to sovereign rank makes his portrayal melt into the vast prospect of Christian philosophy. Mr. Kristeller writes some admirable pages on Ficino's idea of immortality, and yet leaves one wondering whether it is not simply a post-Platonic and Christian concept which he defines (pp. 346–348). He lucidly expounds the conception of love in Ficino. But for those who have Plato's text before them, remembering, at the same time, the *caritas* speculation of the scholastics and the idea of love in the mystic tradition, in St. Bernard of Clairvaux and others, will hesitate to recognize, with Mr. Kristeller, "a new and fertile idea" (p. 287).

The student of the history of philosophy is familiar with the fate suffered in medieval Augustinianism by the theory of illumination. St. Augustine's followers were at great pains to reconcile their idea of truth as discovered "in the light of God" with the idea of truth as obtained through abstraction from sensory data. Plato, in their systems, was once again at odds with Aristotle. The difficulty was how to profit from Aristotle's psychology without admitting that the soul, conceived of as a strictly transcendent entity, was the suffering rather than the active partner in its dealings with the body—an admission which would absurdly reverse

the order of precedence. In the chapter on "The Knowledge of God" Ficino's combination of abstraction theory and illumination theory is set forth in considerable detail. But where Mr. Kristeller hopes to discover the harmony of a unified doctrine, I suspect the juxtaposition of unreconciled alternatives. The rift that separates Plato from Aristotle rends Ficino's epistemology in twain. Since Ficino is unaware of his predicament, he is incurable. At the time when he indited his *Theologia Platonica*, both Augustinianism and Thomism had run their courses. The literati had grown obtuse to problems which had exercized the acumen of former generations. I am afraid Ficino, writing in an earlier period, would have been laughed out of his magistral dignity by his more rigorously logical confrères.

According to personal taste, we may think of the Ficinian *pammixia* of traditional elements as either colorful or unpalatable. But with all his critical ingenuity, Mr. Kristeller does not succeed in revising Ernst Cassirer's verdict: the hankering after reconciliation "obliterates the physiognomy of the great philosophical systems" (*Individuum und Kosmos*, p. 3). There are too many antiquities in Ficino's mansion. After staying with him for awhile, one understands the better the seventeenth-century philosophers with their keen desire to have the house swept and garnished for receiving the spirit of a New Science. Ficino, reared in the intellectual habits of medieval Aristotelianism, felt the full impact of Plato's rediscovered philosophy. In good Renaissance manner, contemplative life and beatific vision *more Platonico* became for him both an overpowering reality and a precious quotation from an ancient author. But his attempt to wed Platonic faith to Aristotelian modes of thought hardly escapes being labelled "syncretism."

To write philosophical books is, according to Plato, a dubious undertaking. The poor words, deprived of paternal protection, are doomed to suffer ill-treatment at the hands of unsympathetic readers. It is the interpreter's task to stand up as a good advocate pleading in behalf of the orphaned arguments. Nothing can be more mortifying to him than to be convicted of blindness to the virtues of his own wards, nothing more familiar than to meet a modicum of scepticism in his audience. Mr. Kristeller discharges the duties of historical advocacy with devotion and skill. Occasionally, the reviewer believes, he goes wrong. But all his errors are on the side of generosity.

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